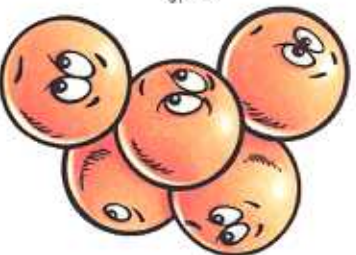


What are antibiotics?

Antibiotics are prescription drugs that attack bacterial germs. They are powerful substances which can kill or disable disease-causing bacteria.

What are bacteria?

Bacteria are tiny organisms not visible to the human eye. Billions of bacteria live in and on people, animals and plants at all times. Most bacteria are helpful to us; some are harmful and cause infections.



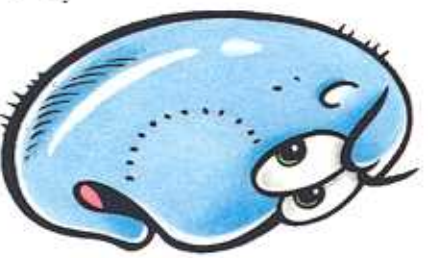
When do I take antibiotics?

Your doctor gives you a prescription for antibiotics when your illness is caused by bacteria, not by viruses.

Does that mean I should take antibiotics for the flu or common cold?

No. "Colds" and "flus" are caused by viruses, not by bacteria.

Antibiotics don't work against viruses.



Are antibiotics safe to take?

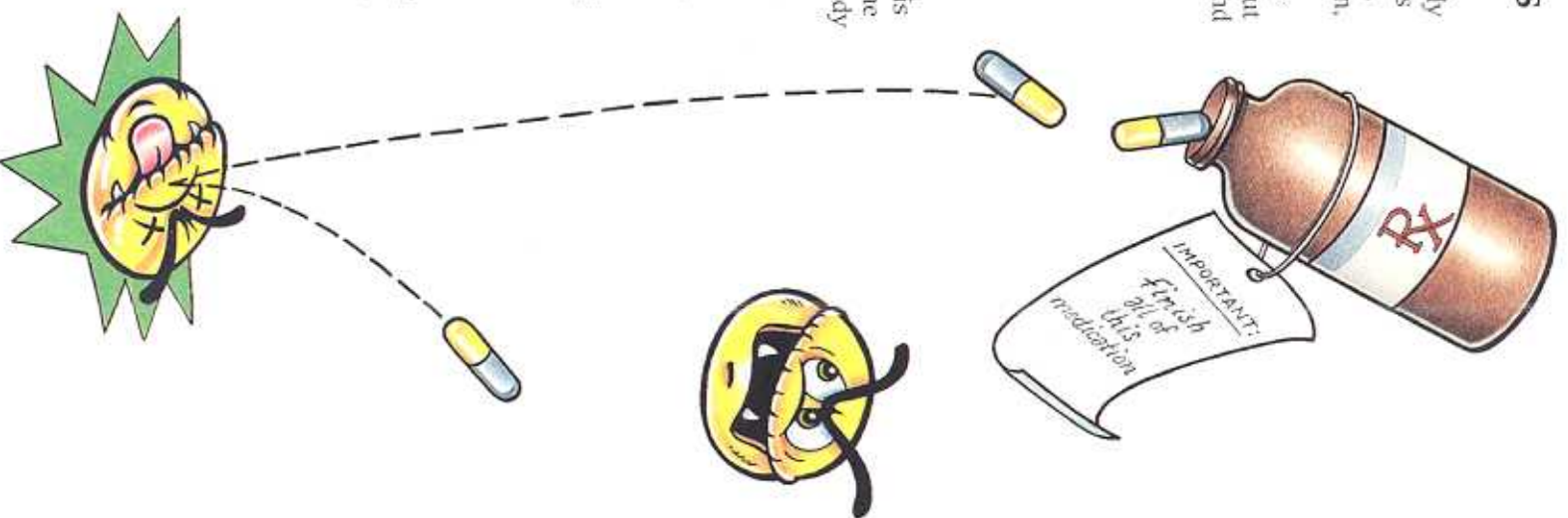
Antibiotics are generally safe and should always be taken as prescribed. As with any medication, antibiotics may have "side effects." Be sure to ask your doctor about potential side effects and how to manage them.

When I start feeling better can I stop taking the antibiotic?

No. Your prescription is written to cover the time needed to help your body fight all the harmful bacteria. If you stop your antibiotic early, the bacteria that have not yet been killed can restart an infection.

Can I save the antibiotic for the next time I am sick?

No. Leftover antibiotic is not a complete dose. Always talk to your doctor because your symptoms may not be caused by bacteria. If you do have another bacterial infection, a complete dose of antibiotic is needed to kill all the harmful bacteria.



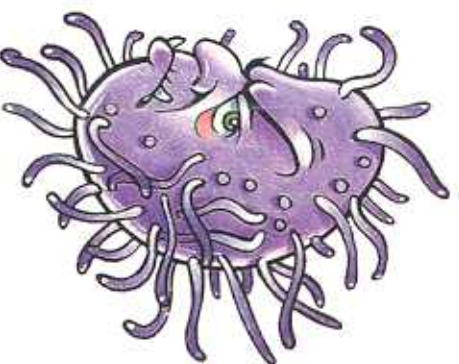
What is antibiotic resistance?

Sometimes bacteria find a way to fight the antibiotic you are taking and your infection won't go away. Doctors call this **antibiotic resistance**.

When resistance develops your doctor will need to prescribe a different antibiotic to fight your infection.

Why should I be concerned about resistant bacteria?

If your prescription does not work against a bacterial germ, your illness lasts longer, and you may have to make return office and pharmacy visits to find the right drug to kill the germ. For more serious infections, it is possible that you would need to be hospitalized or could even die if the infection could not be stopped. Also, while the resistant bacteria are still alive, you act as a carrier of these germs, and you could pass them to friends or family members.



What can I do about antibiotic resistance?

A new class of antibiotic drugs is not expected to appear until after the year 2000. If bacteria become resistant to all our current antibiotics, we won't have any other alternatives. Using antibiotics wisely will help preserve their effectiveness in the years ahead.

REMEMBER

- ✓ Take your complete course of antibiotics exactly as prescribed.
- ✓ Never share or use leftover antibiotics.
- ✓ Antibiotics are not appropriate for every infection. Don't expect or demand them for colds and flu.



Produced by:



... we are smarter!

With our doctor's help we are able to take the appropriate antibiotic exactly as required to stop even the toughest of bacterial infections.



Antibiotics fight bacterial germs!



Germs are smart...

They develop resistance to the medicine we take and are tougher to kill.



When bacteria make us sick we sometimes need antibiotics to help us get better.

The Alliance for the Prudent Use of Antibiotics is an international organization with members in over 90 countries. Its mission is to promote and maintain public health by advocating prudent use of antibiotics. The organization, with headquarters in Boston, serves as an umbrella under which individuals and national chapters form a network dedicated to preserving antibiotic effectiveness and curbing antibiotic resistance.

Approved by:



THIS HEALTH EDUCATION MATERIAL
HAS BEEN REVIEWED FAVORABLY
BY THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF
FAMILY PHYSICIANS FOUNDATION

Sponsored by:

Procter & Gamble
PHARMACEUTICALS
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202



Physician and Patient Approved © Doctors+Designers 1996

0894-5102